

REMARKS

Claims 11-13 and 21-36 are pending in the application. Claims 21, 22, 30 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second paragraph. Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 22, 30 and 32 have been indicated as including allowable subject matter. Claims 11-13, 23-29, 31 and 33-36 have been allowed. The drawings were objected to. Claims 22, 30 and 32 have been amended. Claim 21 has been cancelled. New claim 37 has been added. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter has been added.

Status of the Drawings

The drawings were objected to for failing to include a “terminating attachment plate” as recited in the claims. This recitation has been removed from the claims rendering the objection moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal is requested.

Status of the Specification

The Specification has been amended to replace the term “disk-shaped contact housings” with “plate-shaped contact housings” as suggested by the Examiner.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first and second Paragraphs

Claims 21, 22, 30 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The Examiner states that the term “terminating attachment plate” is not disclosed in the Specification. Claims 21, 22, 30 and 32 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner states that the recitation of a “terminating attachment plate” is vague and unclear. The Examiner also states that the recitation of “disk-shaped contact housings” is unclear because the intended feature is not disk shaped. The Examiner suggests that the contact housings are, in fact, plate-shaped.

The claims have been amended to remove the recitation of “terminating attachment plate.” Additionally, the recitation of “disk-shaped contact housings” has been replaced with “plate-

shaped contact housings” as suggested by the Examiner. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,648,681 to Ushiro et al. (“Ushiro”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,449,300 to Yoon.

Ushiro describes a plug-type connector that “comprises a housing proper 20 in flat block shape, and a pair of retainer loops 30a, 30b, fixedly attached to both sidewalls of the housing proper 20, respectively, and these components are formed of a synthetic resin material, integrally with each other.” See Ushiro, col. 5, line 67, to col. 6, line 4. The retainer loops 30a, 30b are used to hold the connector in place. The retainer loops 30a, 30b include loop-shaped pieces 31a, 31b, respectively, looped shaped pieces 31a, 31b being fixedly attached to either end of flange 22a of housing proper 20. See Ushiro, col. 7, lines 17-21, and Fig. 1.

Yoon describes a plurality of connection terminal assemblies 1 fitted together with a cover 9 thereon.

Claim 21 has been cancelled rendering the rejection moot. Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is respectfully requested.

New Claim 37

New claim 37 recites a terminal element that is attached to a first of the plate-shaped contact housings, a first locking element that is attached to the terminal element, and a second locking element “attached to a second of the plate-shaped contact housings so as to be disposed at a variable distance from the first locking element, the variable distance being a function of the selectable number of plate-shaped contact housings.” Support for this amendment may be found, for example, at paragraph 8 of the present specification, and in Fig. 1. It is respectfully submitted that Ushiro and Yoon, alone or in combination do not teach or suggest a second locking element

that is attached to a plate-shaped contact housing so as to be disposed at a variable distance from the first locking element that is a function of the selectable number of plate-shaped contact housings, as recited in claim 37. Yoon does not describe locking elements. Regarding Ushiro, the retainer loops 30a, 30b described in Ushiro are integrally formed with proper housing 20, and are disposed at a fixed distance from one another that is determined by the length of flange 22a of housing proper 20. See Ushiro, col. 7, lines 17-21, and Fig. 1. Thus, the retainer loops 30a, 30b of Ushiro are not disposed a variable distance from each other that is a function of a selectable number of contact housings, as recited in claim 37. Therefore, even if Ushiro and Yoon were to be properly combined, the housing proper 20 of Ushiro would be limited to use with a fixed number of connection terminal assemblies 1 of Yoon. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that new claim 37 is patentable over the Yoon and Ushiro references, alone or in combination.

In view of the above amendment, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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